

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-06

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TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 239298

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GR, US

SUBJECT: SENATE HEARINGS ON GREECE

1. FOLLOWING IS STATEMENT OF DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY
RODGER P. DAVIES BEFORE SFRC SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE IN
EXECUTIVE SESSION, DECEMBER 5 (UNNECESSARY WORDS OMITTED):

2. QUOTE: ALTHOUGH MAJOR DECISIONS APPARENTLY STILL TO
BE MADE BY NEW GREEK LEADERSHIP, I WILL BE PLEASED DISCUSS
WHAT WE KNOW OF SITUATION IN GREECE.

3. IN EARLY MORNING HOURS NOV. 25, GREEK ARMY, WITH
COOPERATION OF OTHER SERVICES, EXECUTED QUICK AND BLOOD-
LESS COUP WHICH REMOVED GEORGE PAPADOPOULOS FROM POWER AND
INSTALLED LT. GEN. PHAIDON GIZIKIS AS PRESIDENT OF SIX-
MONTH OLD HELLENIC REPUBLIC. WHILE POWER STRUCTURE OF
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NEW REGIME STILL UNCLEAR, IT APPARENT THAT DIMITRIOS
IONNIDIS, CHIEF OF MILITARY POLICE AND ONE OF EXTREME
RIGHTIST MEMBERS OF 1967 COUP GROUP, WAS KEY FIGURE AND
HAD BEEN CONSIDERING IF NOT ACTUALLY PLANNING COUP FOR

SOME TIME. NO USG AGENCY HAD PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF OR WAS INVOLVED IN COUP.

4. COUP TOOK PLACE ONE WEEK AFTER PAPADOPOULOS-MARKEZINIS GOVERNMENT EMPLOYED TANKS AND TROOPS TO PUT

DOWN STUDENT RIOTS IN ATHENS WITH LOSS OF TWELVE LIVES. PRIOR TO THIS, JUNTA HAD TAKEN PRIDE IN FACT THAT IT HAD COME TO POWER AND RETAINED IT WITHOUT BLOODSHED. STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS AND THEIR SUPPRESSION REINFORCED EXISTING OPINION WITHIN MILITARY THAT "MARKEZINIS EXPERIMENT", DESIGNED TO HOLD ELECTIONS AND ESTABLISH LIMITED PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT, WAS ACTUALLY LEADING COUNTRY BACK TO POLITICAL CHAOS THAT CHARACTERIZED PRE-1967 COUP PERIOD. HANDLING OF STUDENT-CONSTRUCTION WORKER RIOTS AND FAILURE OF FORMER PARTY LEADERS TO COOPERATE WITH MARKEZINIS PROBABLY WERE TWO IMPORTANT FACTORS IN TRIGGERING COUP. THIRD, MORE LONG-TERM, WAS LEVELING OFF OF ECONOMIC BOOM, COUPLED WITH LATE-BLOOMING INFLATION AND FOOD SHORTAGE.

5. EARLY PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF NEW LEADERSHIP DENOUNCED PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT FOR PROCEEDING "TOO HASTILY" TOWARDS ELECTIONS THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN A SHAM. PRONOUNCEMENTS CURIOUSLY ECHOED FIRST STATEMENTS OF PAPADOPOULOS COUP BY CLAIMING NECESSITY FOR "CLEANSING OF GREEK BODY POLITIC", AND RESTORING MORALITY IN PUBLIC LIFE. IN POLICY STATEMENT OF NOV. 28, P.M. ANDROUTSOPOULOS ASSERTED THAT NEW REGIME WOULD RETURN COUNTRY TO DEMOCRACY, BUT POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS WERE PREREQUISITES.

6. FOR MOMENT, NEW LEADERSHIP MAINTAINING FIRM CONTROL WITH REMARKABLY LIGHT TOUCH. IN FIRST DAYS AFTER TAKE-OVER, GREEK PUBLIC APPEARED BE EUPHORIC OVER REMOVAL PAPADOPOULOS, AND HOPEFUL THAT NEW LEADERS WOULD RESTORE MEASURE OF POLITICAL NORMALITY. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, ALREADY INDICATIONS OF KINDS OF PROBLEMS THIS REGIME WILL ENCOUNTER AS TIME GOES ON. COMPOSITION OF CABINET, NOTABLY

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LY LACKING PRESTIGIOUS FIGURES, SUGGESTS DIFFICULTY REGIME MAY FIND IN ATTRACTING PROMINENT AND COMPETENT MEN. FORMER POLITICIANS BEGINNING CRITICIZE REGIME'S CAUTIOUS ATTITUDE REGARDING ELECTIONS, WHICH THEY VIEW AS SIGNALING ANOTHER PROTRACTED PERIOD OF GOVERNMENT BY FIAT. GROWING CRITICISM OF THIS KIND WILL OBLIGE GOVERNMENT EITHER ACCOMMODATE OR REPRESS SUCH EXPRESSIONS OF OPINION. IN FIRST ATTEMPTS DEAL WITH CRITICISM, GOVERNMENT CLOSED DOWN ONE NEWSPAPER, "VRADHINI", WHICH PRINTED CRITICAL MATERIAL. PREDICTABLY, CLOSING RESULTED IN FURTHER PROTEST, UNDERLINING CUMULATIVE PROBLEMS THAT CAN BESET ANY GOVERNMENT THAT LACKS BROAD BASE IN POPULAR SUPPORT. SUCH PRESTIGIOUS FIGURES AS FORMER PRIME MINISTER KANELLOPOULOS,

STEPHANOPOULOS, AND ZIGDIS HAVE ATTACKED NEW REGIME.

7. THERE ARE URGENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WHICH ANY GREEK

GOVERNMENT MUST ADDRESS, INCLUDING RATE OF INFLATION ESTIMATED AS HIGH AS 40 PERCENT OVER PAST YEAR. EMERGENCE OVER PAST TWO YEARS OF STUDENT GENERATION AS INFLUENTIAL GROUP, WITH ATTITUDES WIDELY DIVERGENT FROM GENERALLY CONSERVATIVE MAIN-STREAM OF GREEK THOUGHT, IS FACTOR AS YET UNASSESSED, BUT BOUND HAVE IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCES IN POLITICAL LIFE OF GREECE.

8. OUR BASIC POLICY TOWARDS GREECE HAS BEEN MADE QUITE CLEAR IN PAST, AND REMAINS UNCHANGED IN ITS BROAD ASPECTS. PEOPLE OF GREECE AND U.S. HAVE SHARED INTEREST ON MANY LEVELS, NOT LEAST OF WHICH IS IN SECURITY MATTERS. WE HAVE LONG BEEN APPRECIATIVE GREECE'S STAUNCH ADHERENCE TO ALLIANCE AND COOPERATION WITH US IN BILATERAL SECURITY AFFAIRS. AT SAME TIME, WE ALSO CONSISTENTLY STATED OUR BELIEF THAT POLITICAL SYSTEM PROVIDING GOVERNMENT MANDATED BY THE PEOPLE IS BEST ASSURANCE FOR STABILITY IN GREECE. WE FEEL STRONGLY THAT THIS IS GREEK PROBLEM AND NOT ONE FOR OUTSIDERS TO RESOLVE. WE DO NOT INTEND PREACH TO GREEKS, BUT FEEL INTERNAL POLITICAL DYNAMICS WILL INEXORABLY MOVE LEADERSHIP TO SEEK BASE OF STABILITY. OUTSIDE PRESSURE, AS FORMER FON MIN PALAMAS SAID DECEMBER 2, WILL NOT HELP SITUATION. IN OUR JUDGMENT IT WOULD BE COUNTERVAILING.
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9. IN SPIRIT OF SENATE RESOLUTION 205 OF 1969, WE HAVE CONTINUED WORKING RELATIONS WITH NEW GREEK GOVERNMENT. WE CONSIDER RELATIONS BETWEEN GREECE AND U.S. BROADER AND MORE PERVASIVE THAN RELATIONS MERELY BETWEEN TWO PARTICULAR GOVERNMENTS IN POWER. THIS POLICY IMPLIES NEITHER APPROVAL NOR DISAPPROVAL OF PRESENT REGIME IN GREECE.

10. AS WE ASSESS PRESENT GREEK SITUATION, PRESENT LEADERS WILL INEVITABLY BE FACED WITH PROBLEMS OF PLACING THEIR CONTROL ON FIRM AND LEGITIMATE BASE, AS WELL AS DEALING WITH COMPLEX SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INTERPLAY OF VIGOROUSLY DEVELOPING NATION. REGIME HAS STATED PUBLICLY IT PLANS RETURN COUNTRY TO DEMOCRACY, BUT IT TOO SOON ASSESS REGIME'S INTENTIONS IN MORE SPECIFIC TERMS. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE WATCHING DEVELOPMENTS CLOSELY AND SYMPATHETICALLY AND AVOIDING, INsofar AS POSSIBLE, TAKING POSITIONS THAT MIGHT MAKE GREECE'S PROBLEMS MORE DIFFICULT. END QUOTE.

11. ONE HOUR SESSION ATTENDED ONLY BY CHAIRMAN SPARKMAN AND SENATOR JAVITS WAS HELD IN INFORMAL, RELAXED ATMOSPHERE. SPARKMAN EXPRESSED SENTIMENTAL ATTACHMENT TO IDEA

OF DEMOCRACY IN GREECE, DEPLORED DEMISE OF MARKEZINIS

EXPERIMENTWHICH HE HAD FELT WOULD LEAD BACK TO REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT AND HOPED U.S. AND GREECE MIGHT WORK TOGETHER TO RESTORE NORMALITY. MR. DAVIES REVIEWED HISTORY OUR DEALINGS WITH PAPADOPOULOS REGIME, POINTING OUT INCREASING GOG SENSITIVITY TO CONTINUING REFERENCES TO THE NEED FOR REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, WHICH, HOWEVER, MAY HAVE BEEN A FACTOR IN PAPADOPOULOS' FINAL EFFORT TO MOVE TOWARD ELECTIONS. DAVIES STATED THAT ONE KNOWLEDGEABLE GREEK OBSERVER SAW TWO FACTIONS IN PRESENT GREEK LEADERSHIP; ONE AUTHORITARIAN AND BELIEVING GREEK PUBLIC LIFE SHOULD BE PURGED BEFORE THE COUNTRY WOULD BE READY FOR ELECTIONS, THE OTHER BELIEVING THAT PROMPT MOVEMENT TOWARD A CONSTITUTIONAL BASE AND ELECTIONS WOULD GIVE THE ONLY ASSURANCE OF STABILITY. THERE APPEARS TO BE A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THESE ELEMENTS, WITH NO DECISION ON THE REGIME'S PROGRAM YET REACHED. IF THIS
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SITUATION WERE ACTUAL, DAVIES SAID HIS PERSONAL VIEW WAS THAT OUTSIDE PRESSURE MIGHT STRENGTHEN HAND OF NATIONALISTIC, HARD-LINE FORCES, AND WEAKEN THE ELEMENT INCLINED TOWARD DEMOCRACY. IN ANY EVENT GREEK FUTURE WOULD BE SHAPED BY INTERNAL POLITICAL DYNAMICS PRIMARILY.

12. SENATOR JAVITS ASKED ABOUT GREECE'S ROLE AS NATO ALLY; A) HAD THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GREEK ARMED FORCES BEEN UNDERMINED BY THE REMOVAL OF PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS; B) COULD WE RELY ON GREECE FOR CONTINUED USE OF BILATERAL FACILITIES; AND C) WHY WERE WE THE ONLY COUNTRY GIVING MILITARY ASSISTANCE? MR. DAVIES COMMENTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME DISMISSALS OF OFFICERS, BUT IT WAS TOO EARLY TO TELL WHETHER THESE PERSONNEL CHANGES WILL AFFECT MORALE OR DISCIPLINE. GREEK ARMED FORCES HAVE BEEN WELL-TRAINED, DISCIPLINED AND HIGHLY MOTIVATED. SOME CONCERN EXPRESSED BY GREEK OBSERVERS THAT REPEATED COUPS COULD PUT POWER IN HANDS OF JUNIOR-LEVEL OFFICERS, SOME OF WHOM HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED AS MILITANT NATIONALISTS. DAVIES STATED THAT GREECE HAS BEEN LOYAL NATO ALLY, AND EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS DISCUSS VALUE OF U.S. FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS IN GREECE PRIVATELY WITH SENATOR JAVITS. DAVIES DISCUSSED EARLIER U.S. AND EUROPEAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR GREECE, AND POINTED OUT FRENCH AND GERMANS SELLING EQUIPMENT TO GOG SINCE 1967. OUR OWN PROGRAM NOW ON SALES BASIS, WITH FMS CREDITS MAINLY TO FINANCE AIRCRAFT FOR MODERNIZATION GREEK AIRFORCE AS CALLED FOR IN NATO FORCE GOALS.

13. SENATOR JAVITS ASKED HOW DEPARTMENT VIEWED SENATOR PELL'S PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO FOREIGN AID AUTHORIZATION BILL. MR. DAVIES RESPONDED THAT IN PRINCIPLE DEPARTMENT

BELIEVES COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY RESTRICTIONS IN AID BILL
IMPINGE ON INSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH IN
WAY THAT REDUCES FLEXIBILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF
RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS. PELL AMENDMENT WOULD OBLIGE
PRESIDENT PASS JUDGMENT ON WHETHER NATO MEMBER IS
MEETING OBLIGATIONS UNDER TREATY, AN ASSESSMENT THAT
COULD LOGICALLY BE MADE ONLY BY NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL.
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14. OTHER QUESTIONS FIELDIED BY DAVIES CONCERNED GREEK
ECONOMIC SITUATION, HOMEPORTING, WHEREABOUTS OF KING
CONSTANTINE AND PAPADOPOULOS, AND ANTI-AMERICANISM.
JAVITS REQUESTED THAT AMBASSADOR TASCA BE AVAILABLE FOR
DISCUSSIONS WITH SUBCOMMITTEE WHEN HE RETURNS TO U.S.

15. SPARKMAN SAID TRANSCRIPT OF HEARING WOULD REMAIN
CLASSIFIED. KISSINGER

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